

THE CLOTH OF CADOUIN

AS RELATED BY

NATALE NOGUIER DE MALIJAY

The entire issue of *Bulletin du Saint-Suaire* #13, first trimester of 1928, is devoted to a study of the "Shroud" of Cadouin. The article covers 21 pages and includes a bibliography and two pictures of the relic.

The author, Don Natale Noguier de Malijay, Salesian of Don Bosco, worked tirelessly in behalf of the Turin Shroud for some thirty years. An enormous activity over and beyond his responsibilities as a priest and professor of science: lectures, devotional and scientific publications, diffusion of Shroud images and learned responses to those scholars who, in the first decades after Pia's photograph of 1898, rose up in contradiction. Don Noguier never doubted but what a scientific examination of the Turin Shroud would show conclusively that it was authentic on all counts, thus convincing opponents and ending all dissension. With this in mind, he drew up a set of proposals for an exam, and visited Prince Humbert and the religious authorities to urge permission for a team of experts to conduct such an exam at the next exposition. He was not to see the exposition of 1931; he died in 1930, a month after his 69th birthday.

In 1925 he initiated the *Bulletin du Saint-Suaire*, and carried on in spite of every difficulty through 1928. I am grateful to Don Luigi Fossati, S.D.B., for sending me the whole collection in xerox copy.

What is presented here is a condensation of Don Noguier's article; only the extract from the Arculf narrative as published in Alcide Caries, *Histoire du Saint-Suaire de N.S.J.C.* (Paris 1875), has been translated entirely.

In the obscurity of forgotten archives—walled up like the Edessa Image and the Cloth of Cadouin—the old and ancient texts enfold incalculable riches. When by chance one is rediscovered, we read with amazement recurring themes, some of which pose questions to certain currently accepted theories about the Turin Shroud. Legends elaborated around the Cadouin Cloth parallel those invented around the Turin Shroud: there is the trial by fire, the sealing up of the relic in a wall and the miraculous discovery after all trace of it had been lost; and there are thefts of the relic from burning churches.

Later records tell of litigations, appeals to kings and popes, miracles, the removal of the Cloth to safe châteaux in times of various wars. There is even the bishop who, newly installed, has the coffer taken down from the vault of the church and therein finds the relic sealed with a history of its origin as told by the Bishop Arculf. After a "severe and detailed" study of all the documents in the Cadouin archives, the Bishop Jean de Lingendes, in 1643, judged that this Cloth was indeed the *sudarium capitis* mentioned by St. John.

In this article, as in countless documents across the centuries, there

are two items specifically named as being used in the burial of Christ; a *sudarium* and a *sindone*, sweat cloth/shroud. Two distinctly separate items. Three, in fact, because Cadouin possessed also the Holy Chinband, which was brought from the Orient along with the famous Cloth and several other relics and venerated at the monastery since 1117. Don Noguier reports that only a frail remnant of the Chinband remains.

Unfortunately, in the French language the Shroud is still popularly called the *Saint-Suaire*. Suaire comes from the Latin *sudarium*, a handkerchief for wiping away sweat. Many authors, notably Don Noguier and Pere Paul de Gail, insisted that the ambiguous term *suaire* be substituted by the word *linceul* (from *linteolum*, linen cloth), which is in fact the proper word to denominate a large burial sheet. Don Noguier makes this distinction in his article; the *Linceul* is the Turin Shroud, the *suaire* is the Cadouin relic. To avoid using the one word 'shroud' to translate both *suaire* and *linceul*, I have retained *suaire* wherever the author has used it; and where he uses *Linceul*, it will be translated Shroud.

In 1935, in the decorative border on the Cadouin Cloth, an inscription was identified. Written in Kufic characters, a form of Arabic script used from the VII to the XI centuries, the inscription names the Egyptian Caliph Ali, who reigned from 1094 to 1100. Thus are established both a *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* for the manufacture of the Cloth. Of course, this discovery was not known to Don Noguier when he wrote in 1928.

Noguier de Malijay composed this article after his visit to Cadouin on September 20 (1927), the Feast Day, celebrated with processions and grand ceremonies. On that occasion, he was allowed to examine the relic and since he was a professor of physics, chemistry and natural sciences, he would have been careful to give an accurate description.

Description of the Relic

The Cadouin *suaire* is a cloth of fine linen, a bit yellowed by time, evenly woven, with about three threads per millimeter. It is 2.81m long, 1.24m wide, with the selvage edge on both sides; it is sewn onto a backing of red velvet. At each end there are two decorative bands of divers colors; one of flowers, the other of enlaced medallions. The Viscount of Gourgue wrote that the work appears to be of Oriental origin: "It was impossible to determine the mode of fabrication of the decorative bands. They are just as neat, just as carefully done, on the underside as they are on the top. On the underside there are no knots, no trace of cut threads. It is evident that these are not embroidery; they are woven in the cloth and show no relief whatever.

"A pious tradition holds that the Holy Virgin herself wove this cloth in view of the burial of Jesus. In the Temple, the young virgins were employed in the confection of priestly vestments. Knowing by special privilege what would happen to her Divine Son, it is quite natural that the Virgin Mary herself would have prepared in advance this precious linen which

would serve as the *sudarium capitis*, the *suaire* for the head, which in oriental burials were often prepared in advance and richly embroidered. The Saint-Suaire of Cadouin could not have been made except by extremely skillful hands; it is a work of exquisite and unheard-of delicacy."

The Viscount Gourgue was present in Paris, 1867, at the unwrapping of an Egyptian mummy, a Theban priest of about ten centuries before Christ. A big red sheet was folded around the body, then a system of bandelets, tightly wrapped 176 times around the mummy. "Then the demonstrator paused and announced that he was now going to remove the piece called *suaire*. It lay on the top of the body, reaching from the knees to the face, which it covered; then was folded over the head and fastened. I noticed that at both ends it was decorated with a border of fringe."

It is not surprising, then, that a great many cloths were on hand for the burial of Our Lord. The large Shroud bought by Joseph of Arimathea is our Turin Shroud; as for the *sudarium capitis*, that would have been placed on top of the Shroud, from the head to the knees. The other cloths were not used in the preliminary burial, because the ritual washing and anointing had not been done; but they were placed as cushions to support the head and other parts of the body, in such a way as to inclose the body under the Shroud and *suaire*.

St. John relates that he saw the linens lying flat and the *suaire* which had covered Jesus' head not with the other linens, but folded in a place apart.

This *suaire* is evidently the Saint-Suaire of Cadouin.

Several authors have understood John's words, which was over his head, to mean the Turin Shroud, because one could also apply them to the Shroud. It seems to me more plausible that the Evangelist really designated the burial cloths by their true name. In this case, he would have included the Shroud and other cloths in *othonia*, and he would have noticed the *sudarium*, as he says, in a place apart.

In a guide-book for pilgrims to Cadouin, we read: "The respectful attention given to the *suaire* by the angels themselves, by whose hands it was "folded and placed apart", must have designated it in a special way to the cult of the first Christians, who must very certainly have known by whose hands it had been made." Like the Shroud and the other linens of the Passion, it must have been kept first of all by the Holy Virgin in the house of the Apostle John, and then it passed to other pious hands. Whose? Alas! there are no documents to inform us. One must go back to the VII century, when St. Adamnan wrote down the report dictated to him by Arculf. Arculf told Adamnan that on his pilgrimage to Jerusalem he had seen and

venerated the holy relic in the great church where it was conserved and which had been built in its honor. And from the testimonies which he took on the spot, he gave the following account. We transcribe it according to the excellent little book of Fr. Carles, *Histoire du Saint-Suaire de N.S.J.C.*

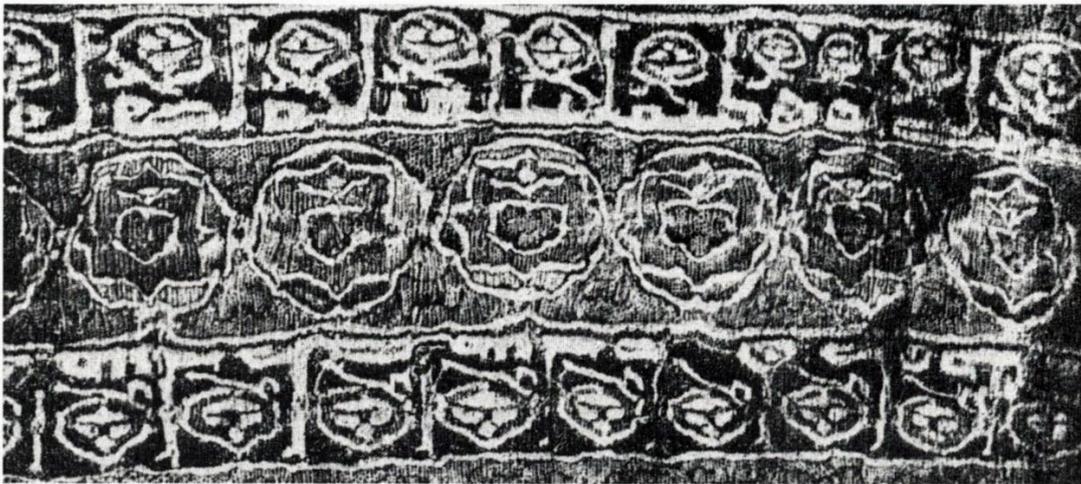
The History

"After the Ascension of the Son of God, a Jew, converted to the Christian faith, had the Suaire of the head of Our Lord Jesus Christ and kept it a long time. Being on the point of death, he said to his children, 'My children, which of you would like to faithfully guard the Suaire of the Lord?' At these words, the oldest son, heir of the father's goods, took the Suaire and sold it to his brother. O prodigy! From that day on, his wealth began to diminish and after several misfortunes he lost everything. The other son, on the contrary, happy to have preferred the Shroud of Our Lord to the paternal wealth, from the moment that he had acquired the Suaire from the hand of his brother, became, by divine favor, very rich in temporal goods, without being deprived of the celestial goods. His faithful descendants guarded it to the fifth generation; but then, as there were no more heirs, the Saint-Suaire passed into the hands of the infidel Jews; these, although unworthy of the treasure, having conserved it with honor, became in their turn rich and opulent. Now the faithful Jews, learning of these things, began to dispute with the infidels on the subject of the Suaire and took all sorts of means to get possession of it.

"This quarrel divided the inhabitants of Jerusalem into two parties: the faithful and the infidels. All together, they went to find the king of the Saracens, who was called Mahuvias (founder of the dynasty of the Omayyad caliphs; he reigned from 661-680). Mahuvias said to the infidels, 'Give me the sacred Suaire which you possess.' They obeyed immediately. The king, receiving it with respect before all the assembled people, commanded that a great pyre be lighted. Then, coming close to the fire, he said to the two parties, 'May the Christ, who is said to have died for humankind and to have had over his head and his body this Suaire which I hold and which is a subject of dispute between you, be the judge and may, he designate by the flames of this fire which party should inherit it.' At the same time, he threw the Saint-Suaire into the pyre. The fire was powerless to touch it; it rose above the flames to a great height and after pausing a little while between the two parties, at last it fell, by divine permission, beside the Christians. These, raising their hands to heaven, rendered thanks to God, and with bowed heads received the Suaire of the Lord with profound respect. They carried it then to Jerusalem, singing hymns of praise and



The Cloth of Cadouin, as reproduced in the *Bulletin*.



Detail of the decorative border.

they deposited it in the treasury of the church. Our brother Arculf saw it, he kissed it and rendered homage. It is 8 feet long."

The Account of Alberic

What happened to the Saint-Suaire afterwards is told by a monk of Trois Fontaines, Alberic, but his account only begins at the time of the crusades and we know nothing about all the intervening years. However, there is every reason to suppose that a strong tradition had survived, because the suaire was recognized without hesitation when it was found at the siege of Antioch. In 1098, after Antioch was taken, the illustrious Prelate-Knight, Adhemar de Monteil, bishop of Puy, legate of the

Holy See in the First Crusade, began reconstruction of the city's church, profaned by the Turks. Hidden in the thickness of a wall, he discovered the suaire in its forgotten place of concealment. He intended to take it back to France for his cathedral at Puy, but he fell victim to those diseases which decimated the army of the crusaders even more than the scimitars of the infidels. Dying, he entrusted the suaire to one of the chaplains in his retinue.

This chaplain embarked for France, accompanied by a humble priest of the Perigord, but now the chaplain, confronting an imminent death, confided the precious linen, enclosed with its history in a coffer of lead, to his traveling companion. This latter, having failed to make the chapter of Puy accept it (they were doubtless fearful of a fraud), he hid it in the humble church of Brunet, his native village, in the township of Cussac.

But he was absent when, in 1117, fire destroyed the church without, however, touching the Relic. At this news, some of the monks who were at Cadouin ran to Brunet and taking the coffer containing the Saint-Suaire, they carried it to their convent.* When the priest returned, he went to recover his treasure but the monks, protesting that they had saved it at the peril of their lives, refused to give it up. Then, so as not to be separated from his treasure, the priest requested the religious habit. He lived a saintly life at the monastery and died in the veneration of all. He was buried under the pavement of the St. Madeleine chapel.

Such are the accounts of the two religious, Arculf and Alberic, which constitute the history of the Saint-Suaire of Cadouin in the first centuries. These accounts were written upon a parchment, framed under glass, which was placed in the church of Cadouin in 1135. The essential parts of the story were engraved on a copper plate. All these documents unfortunately disappeared in the torment.

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The "torment" is, of course, the French Revolution. From there, the author traces the subsequent history of the Cadouin Cloth, bringing it up to his own time. It is strange that in Don Noguier's day, when controversies began to rage against the Turin Shroud, no one saw any reason to challenge the 800-year tradition that the Cadouin Cloth had been used in the burial of Christ.

* The township of Cussac is in the south of the Haute-Vienne; Cadouin is in the southeast of the Dordogne, not far from Bergerac. The Hte.-Vienne lies above the northeast border of the Dordogne. Ed.